The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 109: Measures to eliminate international terrorism *(continued)* (A/72/111 and A/72/111/Add.1)

1. **Archbishop Auza** (Observer for the Holy See) said that the memory and pain of victims should spur the international community to work harder to eliminate international terrorism. Worldwide cooperation, international solidarity and multilateral effort were required to combat terrorism, which was a threat to global peace and security, the first pillar of the United Nations. The Organization as a whole, and each Member State, had a responsibility to protect all from that threat. Indeed, the United Nations was uniquely positioned to facilitate the negotiation and adoption of multilateral policies and strategies to combat international terrorism.

2. The Holy See applauded the General Assembly's decision to establish a working group within the Sixth Committee to foster more cohesive measures at the international level by finalizing the work on the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism and by considering the question of convening a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations. Heightened international cohesion was necessary in order to deny terrorists access to cybertechnologies, a key element in recruiting new adherents, financing their activities and coordinating terrorist attacks. International cooperation would also ensure there was no safe harbour for those who perpetrated acts of terrorism, abetted violent extremism or sheltered members of terrorist groups. Peace and global security demanded that States should put aside their differences to combat the scourge of terrorism.

3. Terrorism was an affront to human rights and the rule of law, and no ideological, political, philosophical, racial, ethnic, or religious reasons could justify or excuse it. All too often, terrorism targeted the most vulnerable and defenceless members of society, including women and children, which made the international mandate to end it all the more urgent. That urgency, however, could not justify policies and measures that sacrificed the rule of law and human dignity in the name of security. It was imperative to uphold the rule of law, adhere strictly to the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and respect fundamental human rights. Otherwise, the international community would risk eroding the very values it sought to protect, alienating large parts of the world population and diminishing the moral strength of its efforts. Arbitrary application of unilateral measures, selective approaches to human rights and disregard for cultures and religions could not win hearts and minds, particularly if they appeared to be brazen demonstrations of superiority and deliberate acts of provocation.

4. Development was the key to ending terrorism by addressing its underlying causes. International conventions that buttressed fair and just societies, along with good governance, social integration of marginalized populations, inclusive education, policies that addressed economic injustice — including job opportunities for those most susceptible to terrorist propaganda — and peacebuilding efforts that promoted peaceful and inclusive societies, would all serve to counter the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. If all Governments addressed the challenges faced by the individuals and communities most at risk of radicalization and recruitment and sought to foster their social integration, the lies behind the distorted terrorist narrative and ideologies would be unmasked.

5. **Mr. Bamya** (Observer for the State of Palestine), welcoming the establishment of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, said that his delegation remained willing to work with other delegations to continue refining the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and to achieve consensus regarding the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism. Terrorism had continued to spread globally, affecting millions of innocent civilians, causing instability in numerous countries and highlighting the need for comprehensive and balanced implementation of the four pillars of the Strategy.

6. A global threat required a global response: while national initiatives were important, only international cooperation could help to confront the terrorist threat properly. Divisive and racist rhetoric, contempt for international law, disregard for the need for prevention and refusal to address the root causes of terrorism were recipes for failure and provided pretexts that could be used by terrorists for recruitment purposes.

7. Terrorism should never be associated with any nationality, civilization or ethnic group or with any religion, especially when terrorists distorted a religion to advance their hatred and their nihilist ideas. Vanquishing terrorism meant upholding international law and rejecting all attempts to misuse the legitimate fight against it to advance illegitimate goals, justify injustice or suppress the right to self-determination of peoples, notably those under colonial or alien domination and foreign occupation.

8. The State of Palestine condemned terrorism and terrorist acts, including those in which States were directly or indirectly involved. His delegation

expressed its solidarity with all victims of terrorism, wherever they were. While action to prevent and combat terrorism was necessary, such action must be in full compliance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, international human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law.

9. Member States had repeatedly affirmed their determination to resolve conflicts, end foreign occupation, confront oppression, eradicate poverty and promote economic growth and sustainable development, good governance, human rights and the rule of law, and they had also expressed the desire to improve intercultural understanding and ensure respect for all religions, beliefs and cultures, as a means of combating terrorism and achieving international peace and security. The international community had a collective duty to live up to those pledges and to promote a culture of peace, tolerance and intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Respect for human dignity, pluralism and diversity could help shield communities from the threat of terrorism, while discrimination, segregation and xenophobia would only foster the hatred that could lead to extremism and terrorism.

10. **Mr. Sabga** (Observer for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that terrorism negated the fundamental principle of humanity and was contrary to the objectives of international law and international humanitarian law. ICRC condemned all acts of terrorism, including those committed in the context of armed conflict, and was alarmed by the harmful effects of such acts on countries, communities and individuals.

11. ICRC was aware that the rise of terrorism was a growing concern domestically as well as internationally, and while it recognized the legitimate right of States to take the measures necessary to ensure their security and eliminate terrorism, safeguards that protected human life and dignity must be upheld. Counter-terrorism activities should be conducted with full respect for the protections afforded to all individuals by international law, in particular international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Those protections extended even to persons arrested and detained in connection with terrorism, including those designated as "foreign fighters". The detention of such individuals must always be in compliance with relevant international laws and standards, in particular rules of international humanitarian law. Independent and impartial monitoring mechanisms, such as ICRC, should be granted access to such individuals, so that they could assist the detaining authorities in ensuring that detainees were treated humanely and in conformity with international law and standards. It was in the international community's interest to ensure that the applicable legal rules were upheld, as violations of those rules could exacerbate the very phenomenon that counter-terrorism efforts were intended to fight.

12. In his view, any agreement on the terms of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism should be consistent with the basic principles and definitions of international humanitarian law. Inasmuch as the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism might include armed conflicts in its scope of application, ICRC deemed it essential to include a provision regulating the convention's relationship with international humanitarian law in order to minimize overlaps and contradictions between the two and preserve the integrity and relevance of international humanitarian law. In relation specifically to armed conflicts, the convention should not criminalize actions that were authorized or not prohibited under international humanitarian law, such as attacking military objectives or persons not entitled to protection against direct attacks.

13. Laws, particularly criminal laws, relating to counter-terrorism should be drafted so as to ensure that they would not impede humanitarian action. Such action included humanitarian engagement with non-State armed groups, even when they were designated as terrorists. Criminal laws dealing with terrorism should exclude from their scope of application activities that were exclusively humanitarian and impartial. Failure to exclude such activities would imply a rejection of the notion of neutral, independent and impartial humanitarian action. It could also jeopardize the mission of impartial humanitarian organizations to protect and assist people affected by armed conflict, particularly in areas controlled by non-State armed groups.

Agenda item 84: The rule of law at the national and international levels (A/72/268 and A/72/861)

14. **The Deputy Secretary-General**, introducing the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities (A/72/268), said that, since the creation of the United Nations, Member States had consistently emphasized the rule of law as essential for sustainable development, peace and security, and human rights. Sustainable Development Goal 16, which included targets relating to the rule of law and equal access to justice for all, was catalytic to all the Goals. Upholding the rule of law meant combating all forms of organized crime, strengthening relevant national institutions to

prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime, and promoting and enforcing non-discriminatory laws. There was no single model for rule of law development. Continued attention was required to keep pace with how societies and the international order were evolving.

15. The United Nations rule of law assistance activities would need to be aligned with, and would be reinforced by, the Secretary-General's reform agenda, including his call for the United Nations to integrate a preventive lens into all aspects of its work. His report on the rule of law for the current session reflected that new approach and provided an honest reflection on why and how the United Nations must do better to support Member States through its rule of law activities.

16. During the reporting period, the United Nations had provided significant rule of law assistance on every continent. It had seen progress in efforts to strengthen justice and security institutions in Afghanistan, Somalia and the State of Palestine. The Organization had supported the establishment of community-oriented policing programmes in El Salvador, Pakistan and Sierra Leone. In Jordan and Lebanon, where the influx of refugees had created tensions with host communities, the United Nations was supporting national authorities to increase law enforcement capacities. It was also working to ensure access to justice for populations that were disempowered and marginalized and to prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence in countries around the world.

17. The report included a number of examples of progressive and innovative initiatives by Member States to enhance domestic justice systems and strengthen accountability for international crimes, and it highlighted progress in the codification, development and promotion of international legal frameworks on climate change, ocean affairs, human rights and other topics. It underscored the need to address the links between strengthening the rule of law on the one hand, and economic activity and environmental protection on the other, and to examine further how legal frameworks could promote economic and social inclusion and improve access to justice for the migrant community. The report also highlighted the need for United Nations rule of law assistance to address long-standing and emerging issues of global concern, including climate change, conflicts of increasing complexity, forced mass displacement, trafficking and transnational organized crime.

18. Translating the Secretary-General's reform agenda into reality would require collective efforts by the Secretariat and Member States. She therefore invited delegations to share their views on how United Nations rule of law assistance could be made more coherent and effective in improving people's lives; section V of the report proposed a number of ideas for discussion. She also invited the Committee to frame its discussions in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets related to the rule of law and to provide guidance on how to strengthen partnerships and cooperation among Member States, while ensuring that they had access to technical expertise to help them meet the Goals. In addition, while recognizing that the Committee did not traditionally discuss work on peace operations, she believed that it was nonetheless important for it to consider how to measure progress on United Nations rule of law support in peace operations and how to ensure that such operations were sufficiently resourced and more closely linked with country team programmes.

19. She would also welcome the Committee's views on strategies for making international accountability mechanisms more effective, cost-efficient and sustainable and for enhancing perceptions of such mechanisms among affected populations and among victims of serious crimes; on how to better evaluate the performance and impact of United Nations rule of law assistance and strengthen support to Member States in complex areas such as counter-terrorism, corruption, cybercrime and transnational organized crime; and on how to build durable partnerships on the rule of law, particularly with regional organizations and international financial institutions.

20. In his first report on the rule of law, the new Secretary-General had chosen not to put forward any recommendations on improving United Nations rule of law assistance, as he preferred to hear Member States' views on the matter. Should the Committee wish, however, he would be pleased to provide recommendations in his next report.

21. In closing, she suggested some subtopics that might be addressed in the Committee's discussions in 2018 with a view to advancing the critical priorities of the United Nations and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the country level — for example, how to use the rule of law to help eliminate poverty, reduce inequalities, support gender equality, protect the environment and create just, inclusive and strong institutions. In that connection, she asked the Committee to consider recommending the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the seventy-

third session of the General Assembly a focus on "implementation of the rule of law elements of the 2030 Agenda and sharing of best practices".

22. **Mr. Al Habib** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that respect for the rule of law at the national and international levels was essential to maintaining international peace and security and achieving socioeconomic development. The high-level meeting of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly on the rule of law had been a milestone in the Assembly's discussions on the subject and its efforts to develop a common understanding among Member States. The Movement would spare no efforts in continuing those discussions in the Sixth Committee, in cooperation with other partners.

23. It was essential to maintain a balance between the national and international dimensions of the rule of law. The Non-Aligned Movement remained of the view that the latter dimension needed greater attention on the part of the United Nations. Efforts to foster international relations based on the rule of law should be guided by the principle of sovereign equality of States, which meant, inter alia, that all States should have an equal opportunity to participate in law-making processes at the international level. All States should comply with their obligations under treaties and customary international law. Selective application of international law must be avoided and the legitimate and legal rights of States under it respected. Prohibition of the threat or use of force in international relations and peaceful settlement of disputes were the cornerstones of the rule of law at the international level.

24. The members of the Non-Aligned Movement looked forward to engaging in discussion on ways and means to further disseminate international law to strengthen the rule of law, the theme of the current year's debate. The Movement wished to emphasize the useful role that the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law played in strengthening the rule of law at the national and international levels. Through its training courses in international law, the Audiovisual Library of International Law and other activities, the Programme helped to improve knowledge of international law and promote friendly relations and cooperation among States.

25. With a view to achieving full respect for international law and furthering its dissemination to strengthen the rule of law, Member States should renew their commitment to respect, defend, preserve and promote the Charter of the United Nations and the rules and principles of international law. The Movement strongly encouraged Member States to identify and pursue measures that would contribute to peace and prosperity in the world and to a just and equitable world order based on the Charter and international law. The Movement also encouraged States to settle disputes peacefully, using the mechanisms and tools established under international law. It called upon the General Assembly and the Security Council to make use, whenever appropriate, of their right under Article 96 of the Charter to request advisory opinions on legal questions from the International Court of Justice. Human rights, the rule of law and democracy were interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and all States should fulfil their obligations to promote universal respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

26. The Non-Aligned Movement remained concerned about the use of unilateral measures, which had a negative impact on the rule of law and international relations. No State or group of States had the authority to deprive other States of their legal rights for political reasons. The Movement condemned any attempt to destabilize the democratic and constitutional order in any of its members. Member States should respect the functions and powers of the principal organs of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly, and maintain the balance among them. Close cooperation and coordination among the principal organs was essential if the Organization was to remain relevant and capable of dealing with threats and challenges. The Movement remained concerned about the continuing encroachment by the Security Council on the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The General Assembly should play a leading role in promoting and coordinating efforts to strengthen the rule of law.

27. Nevertheless, the international community should not supplant national authorities in their task of establishing or strengthening the rule of law at the country level. National ownership of rule of law activities was important, as was strengthening Member States' ability to fulfil their international obligations, including through enhanced technical assistance and capacity-building. United Nations funds and programmes should provide such assistance, however, solely at the request of Governments and strictly within their respective mandates. Account should be taken of the customs and the political and socioeconomic

features of each country, and the imposition of pre-established models should be avoided.

28. Appropriate mechanisms should be established to enable Member States to keep abreast of the work of the Rule of Law Unit and to ensure regular interaction between the Unit and the General Assembly. The lack of an agreed definition of the rule of law should be taken into account in the preparation of reports and in the collection, classification and evaluation of data on issues directly or indirectly related to the rule of law. The data-gathering activities of United Nations bodies should not lead to unilateral formulation of rule of law indicators or ranking of countries. Any indicators should be agreed upon by Member States in an open and transparent manner.

29. Cognizant of the importance of the rule of law within the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement appreciated the role of the Organization's administration of justice system and supported initiatives to hold United Nations personnel accountable for any instances of misconduct while serving in an official capacity.

30. The Movement reiterated its welcome of the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 67/19, which accorded to Palestine the status of non-member observer State in the United Nations and reflected the international community's long-standing, principled support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination, independence and a two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders. The Movement reaffirmed its support of the application by the State of Palestine for admission to full membership in the United Nations, which had been pending before the Security Council since 2011.

31. While the Movement underlined the importance of freedom of opinion and expression, as provided under article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it wished to emphasize that morality, public order and the rights and freedoms of others must be recognized and respected in the exercise of that freedom, in accordance with article 29 of the same Declaration. Freedom of expression was not absolute, and it should be exercised with responsibility and in accordance with the relevant international human rights law and instruments.

32. **Mr. Bessedik** (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that dissemination of international law was one of the best means of strengthening the rule of law at the international level. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation could provide a vehicle for such dissemination, and technology could also be useful. The dissemination of international law could help to strengthen international peace and security and promote friendly relations and cooperation among States. Indeed, States had an obligation under the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1997 Additional Protocols thereto to disseminate international humanitarian law.

33. At the regional level, the African Union Commission on International Law played a valuable role in disseminating international law. The Commission was an advisory body established as part of efforts to accelerate socioeconomic development in Africa through the promotion of research in all fields. It encouraged the teaching, study, publication and dissemination of literature on international law, in particular the laws of the African Union, with a view to strengthening and promoting acceptance and respect for the principles of international law, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and respect for the Union and recourse to its organs. The work of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization offered a good example of bilateral cooperation in disseminating information and exchanging views and experiences relating to international law in order to strengthen the rule of law.

34. At the multilateral level, the United Nations played an important role in disseminating and promoting international law, and the African Group called upon the Secretariat to explore ways of further enhancing that role in order to strengthen the rule of law. The United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law contributed actively to improving knowledge of international law through the International Law Fellowship Programme, the regional courses in international law, the Audiovisual Library and the preparation and dissemination of publications and other information relating to international law. The Programme had played an important role in advancing the teaching, study and application of international law, particularly in developing countries, where it had helped to build capacity in that field. The African Group strongly supported the Programme and wished to express its appreciation of the yearly regional courses in international law for the African region, which had benefited numerous African scholars and civil servants.

35. **Ms. Beckles** (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that adherence to the rule of law was crucial to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the maintenance of peace and security, the prevention of conflict, the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and sustained

economic development and the eradication of poverty. In dealing with challenges such as terrorism, unprecedented migration, protracted conflicts, and other global threats, it was critically important to adhere to the rule of law and the principles of international law.

36. The Community remained unwavering in its commitment to ensure universal adherence to the rule of law at the national and international levels. Its member States had been founded on the principles of democracy, liberty, good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights and dignity; the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual were protected under their constitutions, and their legal systems included provisions that promoted equality before the law and fairness in its application. Moreover, their domestic legislation was buttressed by various international treaties and conventions that promoted the rule of law.

37. The CARICOM countries also remained committed to the implementation of effective mechanisms to enforce legal rules. The International Criminal Court played an important role in promoting the rule of law, encouraging respect for human rights and achieving sustainable peace and development. Its primary objective, however, was to help put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community and to prevent such heinous crimes. CARICOM urged all States that had not yet done so to ratify the Rome Statute of the Court and the Kampala amendments thereto. It also affirmed the important role of the International Court of Justice as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, recognizing its valuable contribution in shaping international jurisprudence and urging all Member States to support the Court's work.

38. Promotion of the rule of law at the international level must serve as the foundation for the achievement of sustainable development and the protection and sustainable management of the common heritage of humankind for the benefit of present and future generations. The Caribbean region remained highly vulnerable to the loss of marine biodiversity and the impacts of unsustainable practices on the marine environment in areas outside the national jurisdiction of Caribbean countries. The Community viewed the conclusion of a legally binding instrument to address those issues as being inextricably linked to the pursuit of justice and fairness for all. It therefore welcomed the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee established by General Assembly resolution 69/292, on the development of a legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, and looked forward to the convening of an intergovernmental conference in 2018 to consider those recommendations.

39. A proper understanding of international law was fundamental to the promotion of international peace and security, friendly relations and cooperation among States and to the rule of law at both the national and the international levels. CARICOM recognized the significant contribution of the United Nations Programme of Assistance in fostering better understanding and appreciation of international law through its regional law courses and seminars, fellowship programmes, and dissemination of legal information. It was aware that some of the Programme's activities had been hindered by lack of adequate resources and urged all Member States that were in a position to do so to make voluntary contributions with a view to ensuring the Programme's continued effectiveness and further development.

40. **Ms. Mezdrea** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that respect for the rule of law was an essential condition for peace, stability and development. Support for the justice sector was one of the principal avenues for promoting the rule of law, democratic governance, citizen security, gender equality and respect for human rights. An effective national legal system that operated in conformity with a State's international legal obligations could help to foster political and socioeconomic stability and boost entrepreneurship and public and private sector investment.

41. The United Nations was to be commended for strengthening accountability for international crimes at the national level and for its activities to strengthen the rule of law in countries by supporting justice and security sector reforms, endeavouring to reduce criminal violence and illicit flows of small arms and light weapons, facilitating access to justice for marginalized groups and working to ensure security and justice for all, including women and girls. The European Union welcomed the Organization's efforts to promote the rule of law at the international level through the codification of an international legal framework and support for international and hybrid courts and tribunals and other international accountability mechanisms, such as the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the

Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic. It also welcomed the legal and judicial responses to issues of serious global concern, such as climate change, migration, terrorism and violent extremism, and transnational organized crime.

42. The European Union commended the Secretary-General's commitment to making United Nations rule of law assistance more effective, sustainable and coherent, particularly in the Central African Republic, Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The emphasis on targeted rule of law support to enhance real impact on the ground was especially welcome. However, given the lack of system-wide initiatives and the persistence of interoperability challenges, it would be useful for the Secretary-General to deepen his assessment and analysis, including in the context of the ongoing efforts to bring about more efficiency and reform across the areas of development, peace and security, management and counter-terrorism. In the context of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the rule of law dimension was essential for delivering concrete results in eliminating poverty, reducing inequalities, supporting gender equality, protecting the environment and creating just, inclusive and strong institutions.

43. Multilateral treaties played a key role in laying down common rules for all nations and strengthening a rule-based international system. Numerous websites, including the EUR-Lex database, provided information on the international treaties to which European Union member States were parties; in addition, the website of the European Court of Justice contained information on national and international case law.

44. A crucial aspect of the dissemination of international law was the promotion of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The effective implementation of the 2010 European Union Guidelines on promoting compliance with international humanitarian law remained a priority. The European Union continued to support the publication of materials and provide training to national authorities, non-State actors and humanitarian actors on international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including in countries in other regions, such as Mali and Somalia. In line with its Global Strategy, the European Union was striving to mainstream human rights in all of its security and defence operations through training for operations staff in international humanitarian law, international human rights law and gender equality. One of the best ways to strengthen the rule of law through the dissemination of international law was to assist legal professionals worldwide in enhancing their knowledge of international human rights standards as contained in international law. The European Union had supported capacity-building for that purpose.

45. The dissemination of international law could also increase the effectiveness and efficiency of international criminal justice. The European Union and its member States had a long-standing involvement in ending impunity and strengthening accountability, including through their support of the International Criminal Court and other international criminal tribunals. The European Union had sponsored numerous seminars and other events to raise awareness of the Court and, where appropriate, had supported training and assistance for judges, prosecutors and lawyers in work related to it.

46. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on the review of the regulations to give effect to Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations (A/72/86), the European Union agreed that the regulations needed to be revised and modernized to take account of recent developments and established practices and to increase efficiency in the registration and publication of treaties. There was much substance in the report to digest, and her delegation would favour a dedicated discussion on the topic within the Sixth Committee.

47. **Mr. Ke** (Cambodia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) said that the rule of law played an integral part in the promotion of friendly relations among nations and was indispensable for the conduct of international relations, the maintenance of international peace and security and respect for human rights. Since its founding, ASEAN had been an inclusive, rule-based community governed by the rule of law. The ASEAN Charter and the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration embodied the fundamental principles of the rule of law, including respect for the peaceful settlement of disputes, democracy, good governance and the promotion and protection of human rights. The Association considered international action based on the rule of law to be crucial to the realization of globally shared commitments on sustainable development, nuclear disarmament and climate change, among other priorities.

48. Multilateral action must be carried out in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. Shared respect for the principles of sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States and non-interference in their domestic affairs would further strengthen international commitment to

the rule of law and enhance confidence among all partners involved. Strengthening the rule of law at the national and international levels required consistency, predictability and foresight. Selectivity and double standards in the application of international law must be avoided. Monitoring mechanisms for multilateral treaties should be supported so as to promote accountability and transparency in the fulfilment of international obligations.

49. ASEAN wished to commend the contribution that the United Nations Codification Division and the Treaty Section had made to the rule of law by encouraging the progressive development of international law and its codification and by maintaining a well-organized register of treaties. Proper publication of treaties enhanced transparency, trust and public awareness of commitments, thereby strengthening the rule of law at the national and international levels. However, the Treaty Section was operating under outdated regulations that did not take account of technological advances, which was in turn causing inefficiencies and eating up limited resources. The Secretary-General's review of the regulations giving effect to Article 102 of the Charter represented an important step in enhancing United Nations treaty practice. ASEAN was in favour of updating the relevant regulations and improving the working methods of the Treaty Section, and of the United Nations in general, in order to reduce waste and inefficiency.

50. In order to enhance respect for the rule of law at the national and international levels, national capacities must be strengthened, including through technical assistance and skills-based training and support to Member States for the implementation of multilateral treaties at the national level. ASEAN welcomed the work of the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group and the Rule of Law Unit in that regard. The Association also strongly supported the work of the Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law in promoting international law worldwide, thereby contributing to friendly relations among States and enhancing their ability to participate in multilateral treaty processes. Ensuring adequate financing for the Programme into the future would further strengthen respect for the rule of law at the national and international levels.

51. ASEAN had long been committed to ensuring stability and security in its region and had adopted a number of treaties to that end, including the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (1976), the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (1995), the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (2002) and the Declaration of the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations (2011). In addition, ASEAN member States continued to work with China towards the early conclusion of a code of conduct in the South China Sea. Those multilateral agreements had also strengthened economic integration and contributed to the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015 and the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint, a strategic plan rooted in the rule of law that sought, inter alia, to foster the full integration of the Association's member States into the global economy, thus promoting a rule-based community that was politically cohesive, culturally harmonious and socially responsible.

52. **Ms. McDougall** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that the rule of law was central to the maintenance of international peace and security, to the prevention of conflict, to the promotion of human rights and to justice and accountability. The rule of law must underpin collective responses to complex global issues, including terrorism, climate change, and intractable conflicts and the ensuing humanitarian crises.

53. The maintenance of an international rule-based order depended on the international community's ability to establish, shape and ensure compliance with international law, which in turn required effective dissemination thereof, including through capacity-building, information-sharing, and clear and coherent development of customary international law. To that end, it was important to publish States' views on the application of international law and of State practice and to ensure that commentaries and court decisions reflected the views of States. The United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law was another important means of disseminating international law.

54. The importance of respecting international humanitarian law in an era of protracted armed conflicts could not be overstated. Australia, Canada and New Zealand were each working to strengthen adherence to international humanitarian law through training, funding and advocacy and through the provision of technical and financial assistance to other Member States. They saw civil society and academia as vital partners in that work. Accountability was a crucial element of the rule of law. All Member States should be able to participate in the development and reinforcement of international legal norms and institutions that promoted accountability, such as the

International Criminal Court. Member States' assistance to initiatives such as the Court's Trust Fund for the Participation of Least Developed Countries helped to ensure meaningful access for all.

55. The Committee should align its consideration of the rule of law with efforts to advance the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 16, which explicitly recognized the importance of the rule of law and its role in underpinning peace, development and human rights. She hoped that that focus would be reflected in the rule of law resolution to be adopted by the Committee at the current session.

56. **Mr. Petersen** (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), said that attempts to undermine the rule-based international order underscored the need to increase the dissemination of international law, strengthen the rule of law and safeguard and promote the full enjoyment of human rights for all. The rule of law was firmly interrelated with the three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, human rights and development — and with democracy. Conflicts and atrocities, acts of terrorism, violent extremism and attacks on democratic governance and effective legal systems continued to pose challenges to the rule of law, as did major global concerns such as climate change and mass human displacement. The interlinkages between climate change, environmental degradation and conflict were becoming more broadly understood and recognized as threats not only to peace but, increasingly, also to overall social and economic development. It was therefore important to take a comprehensive approach to current global problems and to base all responses on the rule of law.

57. A stronger and more concrete commitment to the protection of human rights and democracy was needed in order to meet current international challenges. It was important to remember that the rule of law was both a principle of good governance, encompassing democracy and human rights, and an indispensable means for achieving crucial common goals, including peace and security, equality and the promotion of economic and social development. It was also important to reaffirm that all persons were equal before the law and that everyone was entitled to equal protection under the law.

58. The Nordic countries commended the efforts of the Office of Legal Affairs to further the dissemination of international law in order to strengthen the rule of law. They also wished to pay tribute to the International Law Commission for its strong contribution to the rule of law through its work on the progressive development and codification of international law. The rule of law was considered a key determinant of the quality of governance in a country. Assistance to justice systems worldwide in the dissemination of knowledge about international law, including human rights law and standards, was crucial for strengthening a rule-based order, as was United Nations support for government efforts to achieve sustainable development and economic growth. The Nordic countries relied on a stable, rule-based foundation for international cooperation and were therefore strong advocates for the rule of law through their multilateral and bilateral collaboration activities and their strategic partnerships.

59. Member States should strive to build consensus and work in solidarity with each other to address the most pressing priorities outlined in the Secretary-General's report (A/72/268). They should also foster partnerships and cooperation to ensure effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its rule of law objectives. The 2030 Agenda provided a framework for linking the rule of law work more concretely to the goals of eliminating poverty and inequalities and creating just, inclusive and strong institutions.

60. Fighting impunity and ensuring accountability for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community were fundamental pillars of the rule of law. To achieve lasting peace, those responsible for violations of international law, including violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses, must be held accountable. The Nordic countries were strong proponents of the International Criminal Court as a complement to national courts and also strongly supported the work of other international courts and tribunals in fighting impunity and in promoting access to justice and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The Nordic countries had all contributed or pledged to contribute financially to the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic and encouraged other States to do likewise in order to enable the Mechanism to fulfil its important task of collecting, preserving and categorizing evidence for future investigations and trials.

61. **Mr. Kickert** (Austria) said that, as coordinator of the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law, his delegation was pleased that the Secretary-General had continued to place high priority on the rule of law and agreed that the United Nations must do more to support Member States in implementing the elements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development related to the rule of law. It commended the Secretary-General's call

for a frank and open dialogue with Member States to reflect upon how to improve the effectiveness of United Nations rule of law assistance and requested that his next report should lay out concrete measures for accomplishing that objective. Austria encouraged United Nations entities to enhance coordination and coherence among the three pillars, for example through the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections Areas in the Rule of Law in Post-Conflict and Other Crisis Situations, which had served to increase operational coherence on the ground. It also called on Member States to work with the Secretariat to strengthen partnerships and cooperation, improve the availability of technical expertise and enhance the support provided by the United Nations.

62. A rule-based international system with clear and predictable rules was an essential precondition for lasting peace, security, economic development and social progress. All Member States should actively promote an international order based on the rule of law and international law, with the United Nations at its core, which meant ratifying and implementing international human rights treaties and other relevant international agreements and settling disputes by peaceful means, including through recourse to the International Court of Justice. They should also work harder to ensure compliance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law, and increase prevention efforts, put a stop to mass atrocities and ensure that perpetrators were brought to justice, including through international criminal justice mechanisms. Accountability and the fight against impunity for violations of international human rights and humanitarian law were central to rebuilding post-conflict societies and ensuring lasting peace.

63. Lastly, his delegation wished to commend the work of the Office of Legal Affairs and the Treaty Section in disseminating international law and to welcome the Secretary-General's thorough review of the regulations to give effect to Article 102 of the Charter.

64. **Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein) said that challenges to peace and security called for a strengthening of the international legal order. In that regard, he wished to highlight the significance of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Liechtenstein was a signatory to that agreement and was committed to helping to ensure that its full potential was realized. Criminalizing the most serious forms of the illegal use of force by activating the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression in December 2017 would be another landmark development for the rule of law at the international level. Liechtenstein would continue working with other States parties to the Rome Statute of the Court with a view to ensuring a smooth activation process, garnering the strongest possible political acceptance and preserving the integrity of the Kampala amendments. Establishing individual criminal accountability for one of the most serious offences against international law would complement the prohibition of the illegal use of force under the Charter of the United Nations.

65. The United Nations had developed a strong track record in the area of criminal justice and had demonstrated its ability to ensure accountability for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Significant impunity gaps remained, however. The hopes for a dynamic and productive relationship between the Security Council and the International Criminal Court had largely been unfulfilled, and there was little reason to expect that situation to change in the near future.

66. Nevertheless, the Secretariat and, more recently, the General Assembly had taken innovative and promising steps towards greater accountability. The establishment of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic was the most recent illustration of the Assembly's potential to play a productive role. The fact that the overwhelming majority of the United Nations membership had voted in favour of the Mechanism spoke for itself. His delegation was encouraged by the strong political and financial support that States had given to the Mechanism in recent months and looked forward to further accountability work within the General Assembly, given the profound disagreements in the Security Council on the matter.

67. In comparison with military interventions and peacekeeping missions, activities to ensure justice were inexpensive. Moreover, they represented investments in sustainable peace and thus sustainable development. Holding perpetrators accountable facilitated the reconciliation of societies, brought stability and prevented violence. His delegation strongly believed that such mechanisms should be funded from the regular budget of the United Nations, and it would therefore work with like-minded delegations and the Secretary-General to ensure such funding, particularly for the Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic.

68. **Mr. Heumann** (Israel) said that Israel ascribed great importance to the rule of law, which was key to the promotion of stability and human rights and to the achievement of sustainable development. At the

national level, the rule of law was the essence of any democracy. Good governance, checks and balances and a robust, independent and impartial judiciary were indispensable for the proper maintenance of the rule of law.

69. From the outset, Israel had been a diverse country composed of many different cultural, religious and ethnic groups, a fact which had made it all the more important to guarantee and uphold democratic principles. The principle of equality before the law and other democratic values formed the cornerstone of its governmental system and ensured that minority rights were respected, allowing all cultural, ethnic and religious groups to coexist and thrive. Israel was a party to all major human rights treaties, which reflected its unwavering commitment to human rights, as did its extensive domestic legislation on the subject, which it continually reviewed and sought to improve. As part of the preparation of its report for the Universal Periodic Review, the Government had conducted an internal review that had brought together government officials, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academics and civil society to discuss various human rights issues. Those discussions had provided an important opportunity for policymakers to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by different groups in Israeli society.

70. Israel had maintained its strong and consistent commitment to democracy and human rights, despite the fact that it had had to defend itself against threats to its existence since its inception. Its commitment to the rule of law and to the security of all its citizens had created dilemmas and difficult situations, however. The careful consideration given to security issues was evident from the number of security-related matters brought before the Supreme Court. The Court continually conducted rigorous scrutiny and review of parliamentary legislation, executive policy and administrative action. Its recent review of the country's legislation and policies on illegal immigration was just one example of the ongoing judicial oversight of legislative processes, which was especially important in relation to matters that raised both national policy and security concerns and basic human rights issues.

71. The justice system was also tasked with ensuring that the rule of law was upheld during and after military operations. An independent public commission of inquiry set up in 2010, which included highly reputed foreign observers, had carefully reviewed the mechanisms in place for investigating complaints of alleged violations of the law of armed conflict. The commission had concluded that those mechanisms generally complied with the country's obligations under international law and that its system ranked favourably with those of other democratic countries. The commission had made various recommendations for improvement of the investigation system, however, and a governmental team had prepared a detailed report on the practical implementation of those recommendations, which had been embraced by the Israeli Government in July 2017.

72. The strength of a justice system could be measured in part by the diversity of those it employed, as diversity was key in ensuring that the needs of various groups were taken into account. In September 2017, Justice Esther Hayut had been appointed as President of the Israeli Supreme Court, the third woman to hold the position, and a majority of positions in the Ministry of Justice were held by women. Members of various minority groups also served as judges, prosecutors and legal advisers. In order to ensure real access to justice, both citizens and non-citizens had standing before the Supreme Court and were allowed to petition the Court directly, as a court of first instance, in matters relating to civil and human rights and due process. Financial support was provided to litigants who could not afford legal representation.

73. His delegation supported the ongoing United Nations activities and initiatives for capacity-building and technical assistance as detailed in the Secretary-General's report on strengthening and coordinating United Nations the rule of law activities (A/72/268). Israel had been intensively engaged in providing similar technical assistance in many regions around the world. The Israeli Public Defender's Office had recently carried out projects in several countries around the world, under the auspices of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, to build and promote public defender offices and thereby support the rule of law on a global level. The Israeli Government also cooperated closely with African and Eastern European countries in capacity-building efforts and had organized training sessions for judges, prosecutors and investigators on topics relating to counter-terrorism. It believed that those activities, too, contributed to the further development of the rule of law.

74. Maintaining the rule of law at the international level required an effective multilateral system founded on international law. His delegation supported the work of the International Law Commission and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law in the development of international law. Multilateral treaties contributed to stability, transparency and legal certainty and were thus a valuable tool for promoting

the rule of law. With regard to the contribution of international tribunals to the rule of law, his delegation joined others in emphasizing the importance of the principle of complementarity and stressed that States had the primary responsibility for investigating and prosecuting violations of international law. International tribunals could, however, make a real contribution through the quality of their legal decisions, their capacity to strengthen the rule of law in the arenas in which they operated and their ability to reject attempts to politicize issues and preserve their reputation as independent and professional bodies.

75. Referring to the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, he expressed regret that some members of the Committee insisted on injecting political elements into the important debate on the rule of law.

76. **Ms. Carnal** (Switzerland) said that Member States had a fundamental role in ensuring respect for the rule of law and thereby helping to build sustainable peace and prevent conflicts. States also had the primary responsibility for prosecuting international crimes; in accordance with the principle of complementarity, an international court should intervene only if a State was unable to prosecute such crimes. It was therefore fundamental to strengthen national courts, and her delegation therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's commitment to that process.

77. She was pleased to see that the current year's report identified some areas in which United Nations rule of law assistance could be more effective, coherent and sustainable. Her delegation would be grateful, however, if the 2018 report put forward more specific recommendations on how the Organization would assist Member States in strengthening the rule of law at the national level, particularly in fragile or conflict-affected States. At a time of limited resources, it was especially important to provide coherent and effective rule of law assistance. It would be useful to include a subtopic on how to address that need or on the rule of law elements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the agenda for the next session.

78. The fight against impunity was fundamental for the implementation of the rule of law. In that regard, she wished to underline the importance of the International Criminal Court. Her delegation was committed to achieving universal ratification of the Rome Statute, and it therefore called on Burundi to reverse its decision to withdraw from the Court before that action took effect on 27 October. Switzerland would welcome an unconditional activation of the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression at the next Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute. In situations where the rule of law was ignored, creative solutions were sometimes necessary, such as the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic, which Switzerland welcomed and encouraged Member States to support.

79. **Mr. Celarie Landaverde** (El Salvador), expressing thanks for the support his country had received from the United Nations to strengthen its justice sector, reduce violence and improve public safety, said that El Salvador had been afflicted by violence caused by criminal elements who had sought to terrorize the country's population and weaken its institutions by attacking its judges, law enforcement officials and members of its armed forces. In response, the Government had implemented a security strategy that reflected its commitment to respect for human rights. The strategy prioritized comprehensive victim assistance and preventive action aimed especially at discouraging youths from joining gangs. The strategy was the result of consultation with various sectors of society and had been formulated by a national council comprising representatives of the Government, the private sector, churches, the media, civil society and the international community.

80. Despite those efforts, the Secretary-General's report (A/72/268) listed El Salvador as one of the countries where armed violence and widespread human rights violations were perpetrated by State actors. His Government could not accept that characterization, given the strict controls and the programmes it had implemented in the area of human rights. If ever there was an isolated case of a public official acting outside the law, administrative and judicial mechanisms were in place to determine who was responsible and impose sanctions. Furthermore, an inter-agency coordinating mechanism had been set up to strengthen internal controls in the country's security institutions. In addition to representatives of various government ministries, the country's Human Rights Advocate, members of civil society and representatives of international organizations formed part of the mechanism.

81. His delegation welcomed the Committee's approach to the topic of the rule of law at the current session and recommended that a similar approach should be applied in future sessions. In particular, it welcomed the opportunity to explore ways and means of further disseminating international law to strengthen the rule of law, which could contribute to better fulfilment of international obligations. One way of disseminating international law was through publication of the registry of States' ratifications of

international treaties. El Salvador had ratified a number of treaties relating to international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international commercial law, among other matters. It was also a party to various multilateral instruments and cooperation agreements, information about which could be accessed by the public through electronic portals.

82. It was important to disseminate information about international law among both national officials and the general public. In El Salvador, officials working in the justice sector, in particular, played an important role in promoting and enhancing knowledge of international law and in applying the provisions of international treaties in judicial opinions, which helped to strengthen the rule of law and demonstrate the country's commitment to the international community. It was also important to disseminate international law among members of the legislative and executive branches. Indeed, in a recent ruling on the unconstitutionality of an amnesty law, the Constitutional Court of El Salvador had affirmed that lawmakers must take into account the country's international obligations under treaties relating to human rights and international humanitarian law.

83. The dissemination of international law in the academic and civil society sectors was equally important. In El Salvador specialized courses on the subject had been offered to members of the President's staff, defence and law enforcement officials, maritime authorities and faculty of the School of International Relations at the University of El Salvador. Systematic, widespread dissemination of information about the country's international obligations would lead to better fulfilment of those commitments and enhance legal certainty at the national and international levels, thus reinforcing the rule of law.

84. Mr. Elsadig Ali Sayed **Ahmed** (Sudan) said that respect for the rule of law at the international and national levels was indispensable for the maintenance of international peace and security and for socioeconomic development. His Government attached paramount importance to the rule of law and continually reviewed domestic legislation to ensure that it was consistent with international conventions and standards. It also carried out capacity-building activities to enable national authorities to fulfil their responsibilities with regard to the rule of law.

85. Notwithstanding his delegation's opinion on the substance of the declaration adopted in 2012 by the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the rule of law, it recognized that that gathering had marked a milestone in the General Assembly's consideration of the topic and an important step towards arriving at a common understanding and vision of the rule of law at the national and international levels. Respect for the principles and rules of international law was essential for the maintenance of the rule of law at the international level, and his delegation called upon all Member States, particularly those that were members of the Security Council, to renew their obligation to respect, defend and promote the Charter and international law.

86. His delegation also called upon Member States to settle disputes by peaceful means through the mechanisms and instruments established by international law, including the International Court of Justice and the various regional and international arbitration mechanisms. Likewise, in order to create a transparent and legal framework for balanced international relations, the General Assembly and the Security Council should exercise their prerogative under Article 96 of the Charter to seek advisory opinions from the Court on legal questions.

87. In order to raise awareness of international law at the national level and enable legal professionals to stay abreast of the latest developments in the field, the Secretariat should redouble its technical assistance and capacity-building efforts through the Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law. At the same time, it should avoid promoting one-size-fits-all models by facilitating the sharing of successful national experiences in strengthening the rule of law. A mechanism for systematic interaction between the Rule of Law Unit and the General Assembly should be put in place in order to keep Member States informed of the Unit's activities. With regard to the Unit's data collection activities, his delegation could not accept any rule of law indicators that had not been agreed by Member States in open consultations.

88. His delegation believed it was important to speak openly when it saw that the international justice system was being used to politicize matters or advance political agendas that had nothing to do with preventing impunity. It had become clear that the International Criminal Court operated on the basis of selectivity and double standards, which hindered the pursuit of its noble goals.

89. In conclusion, his delegation wished to underline the importance of respect by all Member States for the respective prerogatives and mandates of the various United Nations organs, especially the General Assembly.

90. **Mr. Mounsaveng** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the principle of equality before the law formed the foundation for fairness, which could help to ensure the maintenance of peace, stability and social order, both domestically and internationally. Without the rule of law, chaos, disorder and social instability would ensue, creating an environment in which all manner of social evils, including crime, corruption and human rights abuses, could thrive. The Lao People's Democratic Republic attached great importance to the principles and norms of international law. With a view to expanding its relations and cooperation with the international community, it had become a party to over 900 international treaties, conventions and agreements in various areas, including more than 450 multilateral instruments adopted by the United Nations and other international and regional organizations. During the current year's treaty event, it had deposited its instrument of accession to the Minamata Convention on Mercury and signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Lao People's Democratic Republic had consistently supported the settlement of disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

91. Domestically, the country continued to adopt and amend legislation to meet requirements contained in multilateral treaties and enable it to implement them in good faith. In addition to laws enacted by the National Assembly, presidential and ministerial decrees and provincial regulations formed part of the national framework for developing and promoting the rule of law in the country. His Government believed that the rule of law was essential for the advancement of peace and security, development and human rights and was committed to working with fellow Member States, international organizations and other partners to promote it at the national and the international levels.

92. **Mr. Locsin** (Philippines) said that the rule of law at the national and international levels was essential for building and maintaining peace, preventing conflict and creating a climate conducive to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations played a key role in encouraging the rule of law by supporting capacity-building and the exchange of best practices at the national level. The vision of the Charter of the United Nations remained as relevant as it had been in 1945, and the United Nations remained the best hope for the rule of law at the international level.

93. His delegation reaffirmed its support for the landmark declaration adopted in 2012 by the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the rule of law, which had highlighted the need for stronger international cooperation to dismantle illicit networks, counter the world drug problem and suppress transnational organized crime, all of which threatened human rights and the security of societies and States and undermined sustainable development by flouting the rule of law. Both the declaration of the high-level meeting and the 1982 Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes also underscored the collective duty to settle disputes by peaceful means.

94. International law was the great equalizer among States. It gave a voice to all nations, regardless of their political, economic or military clout. Anchored in the multilateral treaty system, international law sought to bind the community of nations and prevent anarchy in the global order, without subjugation or submission. International law was equally essential to the rule of law at the national level, where it was an instrument for justice and a precondition for inclusive development. Systems such as colonialism created slave economies and led to economic development that benefited only the masters. At the national level, international law was important for norm- and standard-setting, access to and delivery of justice and the protection of human rights that were threatened by aggression from abroad or oppression at home. International law conferred universality to national law and made it intellectually and morally compelling. At the same time, national law gave practical effect to international law.

95. A rule of law culture should be encouraged during children's formative years so that it would be internalized, since law abidance was an acquired behaviour, not a basic instinct. Schoolchildren should be introduced to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and their moral education should continue through exposure to increasingly complex topics such as the rights of marginalized groups and international humanitarian law. Law schools should offer more specialized training in various dimensions of international law, such as the law of the sea, international criminal law and trade law.

96. Academic institutions, law firms and Governments should support regional cooperation on international law, as exemplified by the United Nations regional courses on international law. States should consider including private lawyers in their national delegations to the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law as a means of enlarging their repertoire of legal techniques and enriching domestic jurisprudence. The establishment of international law

societies open to academics and non-academics and to lawyers and non-lawyers should be encouraged, as should the exchange of experience and best practices among judges and police and security officials, particularly in relation to counter-terrorism. Lastly, the United Nations should spotlight one key multilateral treaty during each high-level meeting of the General Assembly and establish a tradition of holding a signing ceremony for a major international agreement, such as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017 and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2016.

97. **Mr. Al-Sulaiti** (Qatar) said that the current situation at the international level had shown that the rule of law remained the key to the success of international efforts to achieve the objectives for which the United Nations had been established. The international community had adopted numerous international treaties aimed at fostering peace and stability in international relations. Those instruments underscored the importance of the rule of law and called on countries to meet their obligations at the national and international levels. Nevertheless, regional and international conflicts, tension and crises, with their attendant burden of suffering, persisted. Despite numerous conflicts, the international community remained convinced that international relations should be based on the rule of law.

98. The international community had recognized that the rule of law could not prevail unless dignity and human rights were protected and unless international law was respected in international relations. Qatar was committed to the principles of the rule of law and continued to demonstrate its commitment at both the national and the international level. At the national level, government institutions were careful to respect the rule of law as an essential means of promoting good governance and achieving equality and justice for all citizens and residents of the country. It attached particular importance to strengthening the relevant State institutions and putting in place a domestic legal framework that was consistent with international standards.

99. In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, relations between States should be governed by the rule of law and the principles of equality and mutual respect and adherence to the principles of international law. The behaviour of countries should be consistent with international law and with all the obligations that it entailed. It was important to put in place monitoring mechanisms to ensure that countries fulfilled those obligations.

100. The use of coercion in international relations, usurping the sovereign rights of States and attempting to intervene in their internal affairs, was a flagrant violation of the rule of law at the international level. Respect for the sovereignty of States was the cornerstone of international relations based on the rule of law. The imposition of unilateral measures outside the framework of the United Nations was also a clear violation of international law and represented a threat to the international community as a whole. Such actions undermined the mandate of the Security Council, which was the sole organ empowered to impose sanctions under the Charter. Moreover, they fuelled conflict and enabled terrorist organizations to advance their illegal objectives by exploiting the lack of coordination between countries imposing such measures and their targets.

101. The Government of Qatar was convinced that respect for the rule of law was a sine qua non for international peace and security and for development, and would continue to cooperate with the international community in fostering the rule of law by contributing to the peaceful settlement of disputes at the international and regional levels, in keeping with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. At the regional level, it would continue to do its utmost to support the work of the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Centre in Doha, which was playing an important role in efforts to combat corruption and promote the rule of law.

102. **Mr. Al Arsan** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he wished to object to statements made by the representatives of Liechtenstein and several others with regard to the so-called International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic. He would remind those representatives that General Assembly resolution 71/248, through which the Mechanism had been established, had not enjoyed consensus and that, furthermore, it had been adopted under conditions that were neither transparent nor honest. The resolution was the result of political machinations by Liechtenstein and a State that was a known supporter of terrorism. He invited all delegations to read the letter that his delegation had addressed to the Secretary-General (A/71/799), in which it had detailed the glaring legal shortcomings in the General Assembly resolution and the manner in which it had been adopted and in the Mechanism itself. The letter had also highlighted the dangerous political objectives that had motivated Liechtenstein and Qatar to mount the effort to set up the illegal mechanism.

103. The establishment of the Mechanism had hindered the national and political reconciliation efforts under way in Geneva and Astana. Furthermore, 80 per cent of the voluntary funds collected under the Mechanism had come from the Government of Qatar, which was supporting terrorism in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Head of State of that country had stated clearly and unequivocally that they believed that the Security Council's classification of the Nusrah Front as a terrorist organization should be reviewed, which was tantamount to declaring support for that organization and its barbarous activities on Syrian territory. He called upon the representative of Qatar to stop using United Nations forums to raise the profile of the Mechanism and its activities. The representative would do better to talk about the money-laundering activities of the oil and gas industry, in which both Qatar and Liechtenstein were complicit. Indeed, some of the money laundered through Liechtenstein was being used to purchase weapons that then fell into the hands of terrorists in the Syrian Arab Republic, who used them to destroy infrastructure and kill civilians.

104. The principles of international law were an indivisible whole. Countries could not pick and choose which ones to uphold. Those who thumbed their noses at Security Council counter-terrorism resolutions and formed illicit partnerships while pretending to champion human rights clearly had a hidden agenda.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.